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ABSTRACT

This report describes the rehabilitation curriculum of Hunter College (New York). The curriculum is designed to educate and train qualified Master's level students, the majority of whom are minority, disabled, or working women, to become professional rehabilitation counselors for multidisabled alcohol abusers. Individuals with this unique skill will fill the gap between rehabilitation agencies serving the disabled and those serving alcoholics. A number of studies have found that alcohol dependency is as prevalent among the disabled as among the general population. Many disabled persons are excluded from the services of professional chemical dependency agencies by such obstacles as a lack of wheelchair access and interpretive services for the deaf. Also, they may encounter negative attitudes on the part of alcoholism counselors who may be ignorant of the psychosocial aspects of various disabilities. Expected outcomes of this project include the following: graduating students will bring to any position in the rehabilitation field a sensitivity to this subject; graduates will be eligible to take the New York State credentialing examination for alcoholism counselors and the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor examination for which all graduating students are eligible; a core of audiovisual materials will have been developed; and the curriculum can act as a model for other rehabilitation training programs. Contains 6 references. (SM)

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INNOVATION GRANT TO DEVELOP A UNIQUE REHABILITATION CURRICULUM TO TRAIN REHABILITATION COUNSELING MASTER'S STUDENTS IN ALCOHOLISM COUNSELING TO WORK WITH MULTIDISABLED ALCOHOL ABUSERS

HUNTER COLLEGE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND COUNSELING PROGRAMS

MASTER'S PROGRAM IN REHABILITATION COUNSELING

DR. JOAN BUXBAUM, PROJECT DIRECTOR

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

REHABILITATION RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

ABSTRACT

A number of studies have found that the incidence of alcoholism among the disabled was as high as that among the general population. In addition, there is a large population that has suffered disabilities as a result of alcohol related accidents. Rehabilitation professionals have not been adequately trained to recognize and treat multidisabled alcoholics, while alcoholism counselors are unfamiliar with many essential issues and services affecting the disabled.

A professionally trained rehabilitation counselor, simultaneously trained as an alcoholism counselor, could effectively meet the needs of this special population by helping people with disabilities, who abuse alcohol, to live more productive and useful lives. The Hunter College Master's Program in Rehabilitation Counseling now educates and trains qualified students, a majority of whom are minority, disabled, or working women, to become professional rehabilitation counselors. Upon completion of the program, graduates are awarded a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling and additionally will have earned a significant number of alcohol specific credits towards credentialing as alcoholism counselors. Individuals with this unique skill will fill the gap between rehabilitation agencies serving the disabled and those serving alcoholics.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

There has been a serious need in the Greater New York area for specially trained professional counselors, capable of recognizing, understanding, and working with disabled clients who are, or are at risk to become, alcohol dependent.

A number of studies have found that alcohol (chemical) dependency is as prevalent among the disabled as among the general population. Using the most conservative estimates and surveys of the disabled population it is deduced that there are at least 2.1 million multidisabled alcoholics in the U.S. Despite the clear need -- made evident by the numbers alone -- for an alcoholism program of prevention, treatment, and follow-up services for this group, few educational programs and few services exist that adequately train and counsel multidisabled alcoholic abusers.

Many disabled persons are still excluded from the services of professional chemical dependency agencies by such obstacles as a lack of wheelchair access and interpretive services for the deaf. In addition, the disabled alcoholic may encounter negative attitudes on the part of alcoholism counselors who may be ignorant of the psychosocial aspects of various disabilities. On the other hand, programs that serve the disabled usually do not offer special services to the alcoholic and drug-addicted, and often fail to recognize, or even deny, the existence of these problems in their clients. Since medication is common in the treatment of the disabled, they face unusually high risks if they drink. In a 1981 study of 400 rehabilitation advocacy agencies and alcohol programs, less than 10 percent were providing services to the multidisabled alcoholic.

These negative attitudes and service barriers that exist even among professional counselors have deepened the problem of the disabled alcoholic. The circumstances point to a real need to educate new counselors and re-educate professional counselors who deal with disabled and alcohol dependent clients in order to create counseling experts who specifically treat disabled alcoholics and can serve as a liaison between the rehabilitation agencies serving the disabled and those serving alcoholics.
Alcoholism has been called the most destructive, pervasive, costly, and debilitative disease, yet the most rehabilitative. Untreated, it is ultimately fatal; diagnosed and successfully treated, the recovery is most complete. Given the extent of alcoholism among the disabled; the susceptibility of the disabled to alcoholism; the treatability of the disease; and the barriers that keep the multidisabled alcoholic from being recognized, treated and helped toward recovery, it becomes essential that

rehabilitation professionals be trained to recognize and deal with alcoholism as a serious factor that can sabotage the rehabilitation process if not detected and treated.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Purpose and Objectives

To fill the need for rehabilitation counselors able to recognize, diagnose, and treat alcoholism in their disabled clients by training students to become experts in alcoholism enroute to the rehabilitation-counseling master's degree.

To provide public and private New York area agencies and corporate, union, and government Employee Assistance Programs with rehabilitation counselors who have had specialized training in the treatment of alcohol abuse as well as other disabilities (physical, mental, and emotional) and who can qualify for New York State certification as alcoholism counselors (CAC).

Methods

The two-year curriculum of the Hunter Rehabilitation Counseling Program has been revised to incorporate an alcohol (chemical) dependency specialization in the second year. Alcohol specific content modules have been added to all but two courses as part of the curriculum sequence. All students in the Rehabilitation Counseling Program are required to take these courses. At the beginning of their second year, students can choose a specialization in alcoholism counseling by taking three new courses which have been developed specifically for this purpose, Alcohol Dependency Counseling, Alcohol Abuse in the Work Place, and Special Problems of Alcohol Dependent Women. A student in the alcoholism specialization has a choice of field work sites in alcoholism agencies or rehabilitation agencies.

Grant funds provide for experts in alcoholism who teach in the areas requiring alcohol specific content, consult with faculty and students and help develop specific audio-visual materials necessary for teaching skills and techniques in alcoholism counseling.

Financial assistance has been provided as required to parttime students for needs related to schooling.

STAFF

The project is directed by Dr. Joan Buxbaum

Lecturers are hired on a per semester basis for teaching and consultation, and the development and production of audio-visual materials.

A part-time administrative assistant was hired for the duration of the project.

EVALUATION

Properly collected and synthesized evaluations from all interested parties -- faculty, students, agencies, and practitioners -- are critical to the ongoing vitality of any program. Several activities supporting this objective include:

a. The faculty will regularly evaluate students' progress through informal meetings, as sell as through the more formal evaluative process to be conducted by the project director and agency supervisors.

b. Periodic evaluations are undertaken with field work agencies to assess the adequacy of preparation of program graduates.

c. Students evaluate the faulty and program each semester.

d. The members of the college administration and the division chairman evaluate the faculty.

e. An Advisory Committee of experts in the field of alcoholism has been appointed and play an ongoing role in program evaluation.

Expected outcomes

a) Students graduating from the program will bring to any position in the rehabilitation field sensitivity to the problem of alcoholism among the disabled and the ability to recognize and treat it.

b) Students graduating with the alcoholism specialty will be eligible to take the New York State credentialing examination for alcoholism counselors (provided the work requirement is satisfied) as well as the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor examination for which all graduating students are eligible.

c) Graduates with this skill will fill the gap between rehabilitation agencies serving the disabled and those serving alcoholics.

d) A core of audio visual materials will have been developed which will be available to the community and agencies as well as to the Hunter College program.

e) The curriculum can act as a model for other Rehabilitation Training Programs.

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